

THE PARISH MESSENGER

News of the Icelandic Evangelical Lutheran Synod of America

VOL. 7

WINNIPEG, MANITOBA — XMAS, 1951

No. 4

Christmas In Your Heart

It is Christmas in the windows of unnumbered stores around the world. For a great number of Canadians and Americans Christmas is little more than a time when we shop for presents for our family and friends; a time when we also receive presents from others. This phase of the Christmas celebration is often glamorous and showy, filled with hustle and bustle, noise and excitement. But if that is all there is to Christmas, then at best it is a pretty hollow affair.

It is Christmas in the dining-rooms of countless houses up and down the land. Yes, for thousands of people in Canada and the U.S. and in other parts of the globe Christmas is a time when families get together and gather 'round the festive board. True, it is pleasant to spend this season in the fellowship of friends and loved ones, and ordinarily there is nothing wrong with enjoying a delightful meal of roast turkey, and mince pie, and plum pudding. But, unless Christmas means more than that it is only an empty and extravagant holiday.

It is Christmas in the candle-lighted churches dotting the countryside and nestled in the villages and town around the whole wide earth. Christmas is the one season of the year, perhaps, when most Canadians and Americans like to attend at least one Church service. But, on the part of many, it is a rather sentimental gesture. It is nice to hear the old familiar carols; there's something tender and heart-warming about the simple old story of the Babe in the manger—and the star, and the shepherds, and the angels, and the wise men. Going to Church on Christmas brings back fondly-cherished memories of childhood. Surely, that is the meaning of Christmas? Not necessarily. Christmas means very little, really, unless it is also Christmas in your heart! God sent His own Son into the world on Christmas Eve for you! He came to us as a helpless infant, but He is the everlasting Son of God, the King of kings and Lord of lords! Jesus was born in tiny Bethlehem in order that He might come into the hearts and lives of all men everywhere. Mary laid Him in a manger, but He wants most of all to find a place in your heart—to be your Saviour and your King now and forever. Friend, is it Christmas in your heart? It is? Then it is Christmas, Christmas indeed! Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men.



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Evangelical Lutheran Synod of
America.

Printed Quarterly in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

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Christmas Greetings

Stars shine these December evenings in the fathomless skies. The bells ring again on Christmas. We shall hear the ancient story of our Saviour's birth. And we shall understand that the meaning of our lives is focused in that long-ago night in Bethlehem, when God became man to redeem us from the dreadful darkness of being separated from Him. To us of childlike faiths God's light shines bright.

It is my prayer that you, the readers of "The Parish Messenger", will be possessed with this Christmas faith in Christ Jesus, the Lord of Life, and thus be blessed with JOY, HOPE, and PEACE.

—Eric H. Sigmar

Christmas Eve

"How often have I thought: On
Christmas Eve

If only I could walk abroad, and find
Some little village-place, of Bethlehem kind,

Hushed in the spell that dusk and
lamplight weave;

Pass some low door beneath a stable
eave,

And catch a stirring and a gleam
behind—

Would the great birth grow vivid to
my mind?

And would I then more potently
believe?

What need, O Lord, to see Thy
presence thus,

Or watch for starry band or starry
sphere

When Thou art still IMMANUEL:
God with us,

Building Bridges

Enemies destroy bridges. Friends build them. Through **Lutheran World Action** we have been building bridges for Christ in many parts of the world—bridges of helpfulness and reconciliation. They reach out to orphaned missions, to distressed churches in Europe, and to isolated groups of refugees all over the world—millions of refugees, many of them Lutheran. These bridges are spanning century-old nationalistic and racial barriers. They are bringing closer together the scattered members of the Lutheran family of churches. They are opening new areas of cooperation in missions, inter-church aid, exchange of personnel and ideas, Christian study and action. Over them we have moved tons of food, clothing and medicine to sustain life . . . men, money and religious materials to help rebuild shattered church life. Over them we have assisted tens of thousands of refugees to find opportunity in new lands. In return have come to us the priceless lessons learned by our brethren during struggle and conflict—it's been a two-way bridge.

Lutheran World Action seeks to strengthen the Church everywhere, so that she can carry out her God-given task of reconciling man to God and to his fellow-man.

The tremendous needs for Lutheran World Action help ("Love's Working Arm") are challengingly before us. The pitiful condition of millions of refugees, and the plight of our brethren behind the Iron Curtain, calls for a response from us. Let each congregation in our synod make a special Christmas offering for Lutheran World Action. ("Love's Willing Answer.")

Forever and immeasurably near?
What need with shepherds or with
kings discuss
Thine ancient birthplace? Thou art
now and here!"

Foam Lake Congregations Bid Farewell to Rev. and Mrs. S. J. Sigurgeirson

Prior to their departure for Wallace, Ind., where Rev. Sigurgeirson has accepted a call to a pastoral charge, Rev. and Mrs. S. J. Sigurgeirson were honored by their Lutheran congregation, on Sunday afternoon, September 23, when a large number gathered in the basement of the United Church to bid them God-speed. As they were seated at the flower-decked luncheon table, which was set for the guests of honor and pioneer members of the congregation, Mrs. A. Hagen presented Mrs. Sigurgeirson with a corsage of sweet peas and fern. Following lunch, Mr. H. J. Helgason, chairman of the Church Board, paid tribute to Rev. and Mrs. Sigurgeirson for their contribution to the work of the church in this community and expressed regret that they were leaving to take over another charge. On behalf of the congregation he presented them with a purse of money. They were also the recipients of a very generous offering received at the regular Sunday afternoon service earlier that day. Both Rev. and Mrs. Sigurgeirson thanked the congregation for their fine gift and particularly for the spirit that prompted the gesture. They also thanked their Church Board for their cooperation, the Misses Sylvia and Signy Bjornson and Mrs. A. Hagen, who had been organist for their services, and all those who in so many ways had made their two years in Foam Lake so pleasant.

Rev. and Mrs. Sigurgeirson have endeared themselves to all with whom they have come in contact and it is with a genuine sense of regret that the entire community as well as their own congregation sees them take their departure.

Rev. and Mrs. S. J. Sigurgeirson were honored by the choir and congregation of the Foam Lake United Church on Sunday evening, Sept. 23,

when, after the evening service, Rev. H. E. Fennell invited those present to the church basement for an hour of fellowship. Favorite hymns were sung with Glen Narfason at the piano, then the choir, with Mrs. Sigurgeirson and Mr. J. Wooff taking solo parts, sang "God Be With You Till We Meet Again". In a short address, Rev. Fennell expressed the regret of the United Church congregation at the prospect of losing Rev. and Mrs. Sigurgeirson from our community. He thanked Rev. Sigurgeirson for his kindly cooperation whenever it was necessary for them to work together and also for taking over the services in the United Church when Mr. Fennell had to be out of town. To Mrs. Sigurgeirson he tendered thanks for the fine work she had done in the United Church Choir and mentioned the pleasure her solos had given listeners both at church and at choir concerts. He then called on Mrs. Edwin Breiddal, president of the choir, who, on behalf of the congregation, presented Mrs. Sigurgeirson with a train case, and Mr. G. T. Killam, a member of the Session, who presented Rev. Sigurgeirson with a leather brief case. Both Rev. and Mrs. Sigurgeirson expressed their thanks and made mention of the warm friendliness they had received from members of the choir and congregation, also the fine spirit of cooperation that existed between the two churches. Lunch was served by members of the choir.

—Rannveig K. G. Sigbjornson.

Isn't this emphasis on money irreligious?

Answer: No, money is earned through God-given intelligence, hands, ability and strength. Money is human personality. It can be used for good or evil. When man gives money for the Lord's work, it is an act of prayer and worship.

News Flashes from the Parishes . . .

We are grateful to have heard from so many of our parishes; our only regret is that we don't hear from all of them.

Pastor Johann Fredriksson reports from the Churchbridge Parish in Saskatchewan:

"Churchbridge is only a small parish. But I have served there three summers, and the response has been beyond the fondest dreams. It is the only parish I have served where church attendance is at the average greater than the membership enrollment. Every church member considers it his duty to come to church and bring a friend, if possible. The choir consists of over 20 members, under the leadership of Mr. and Mrs. Marvin. It is a credit to any church, and creates a holy atmosphere at the services. Truly the Concordia Church is a pastor's paradise. We also had a service in the community hall at Holar. We expected about 30 to 40 people to come. But we were greatly surprised to see the hall packed to capacity and people standing out to the sidewalk. They hunger and thirst for the Word of God, and they have been blessed, and their minister has been greatly blessed to serve them.

In view of increasing duties out East, I found it necessary to resign from Churchbridge parish and leave them without a pastor. This was not easy to do. But they understood, I was needed elsewhere and beheld it in the spirit of Christ. The Concordia Congregation gave Mrs. Fredriksson and myself a grand reception in the Church Hall before we left and presented us with a purse and gifts."

Pastor Fredriksson also reports from his parish in Lundar, Manitoba: "We have benefitted greatly by having the Synodical convention here last summer. Each member left something with us which is constantly helping us in our church efforts. Lundar has often been re-

ferred to as an unorganized mission field. But last summer at the convention the community manifested a grand cooperation and its real attitude toward the church. We discovered strength and ability we did not know we had. We will use this power to build up our parish."

During this past year thirty adults and 16 children have become members of the Selkirk Lutheran Church, reports Pastor S. Olafsson. Sixteen were received by confirmation. The congregation has recently installed a new oil furnace in its church.

The three congregations of Minneota Parish have decided to entertain the Synod convention next summer, reports Pastor G. Guttormsson. At this convention, Pastor Guttormsson's son, Stefan, will be ordained into the ministry.

The Junior Luther League of St. Paul's and Westerheim congregations gathered over eight hundred pounds of clothing for Lutheran World Relief in two drives this summer and fall.

The church building of the United Lutheran Church of Cavalier, N.D., moved into the city last January, has been placed on a foundation this fall. There is a good sized basement, with space set aside for furnace room, kitchen, auditorium, and rest rooms. The old tower has been removed to make way for larger entry facilities. The new entry will have space for a cloak room and a stairway leading into the basement. In preparation for winter the church was also resingled. The congregation held its services in the building throughout the summer, but since the work began on the church this fall it has moved back to the Masonic Hall. It is hoped that before the winter is over the basement at least will be heated and available for use.

President E. H. Fafnis visited and preached in Geysir, Vidir and Arborg communities as well as the Gimli

Parish on October 21st. Gimli's pastor, Harald Sigmar, conducted services in the Mountain Parish that same Sunday.

Arnes congregation of Gimli Parish celebrated in October the dedication of the new lights and fixtures that were placed in memory of various individuals from that community. The service was made very festive with tenor Oli Kardal singing two vocal solos in connection with the dedication.

Here's a reprint from the Church bulletin of First Lutheran Church, Sunday, September 30th: "The past six months have been a period of unusual activity, as well as heavy expenditure in the Church, but we have a great deal to show for it. There was the purchase and alteration of the parsonage, the landscaping and fencing of the lot south of the church, the renovation of the men's washroom downstairs, the installation of the flood valve, which this very summer saved the basement floor from inundation on two occasions, and the resurfacing and varnishing of the floor. Work has commenced on widening the entrance into the lower auditorium to comply with the regulations of the Fire Department, and new steps are being built together with a platform outside the door of the choir room, a much needed improvement."

At the recent annual meeting of the Vancouver congregation of our Synod, the following men were elected to the Board of Trustees: Mr. S. Gillis, L. H. Thorlakson, G. Hendrikson, B. Thorlacius, B. Kolbeins, F. Bardal and R. Ogg. The congregation is still awaiting word from the Rev. E. Brynjolfson, who has been extended a call to be its pastor. This fall, Dr. Sigmar of Blaine, and Pastor Eric Sigmar of Seattle, have conducted services for the congregation.

At a special service of Confirmation and Reception of New Members in Calvary Lutheran Church, Seattle, sixteen adults and seven children

were received into the membership of the congregation. Ellen Sigurdson of Bremerton, Wash., was confirmed, and the following adults became members: Mr. and Mrs. John Sturlaugson, Emily and Ted Sturlaugson, Mrs. R. Remley, Mr. and Mrs. Fred Erlendson, Mr. and Mrs. R. Stevenson, Mr. Dale Juel, Mr. Milton Gustavson, Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Einarson, Mr. and Mrs. Ed Hill, Mrs. E. Sigmar. Sixty-six received the Sacrament of the Altar at this service.

Mention has been previously made of the purchase of a parsonage at Blaine. This fine five-room cottage was purchased for a very reasonable cost in this day of high prices, and it has since been completely re-decorated and renovated. Because of the tremendous amount of volunteer help, the cost of renovation was relatively very little. Many men and women of the congregation and community spent hours in painting, carpentry and cleaning. An oil heater and hot-water heater have been purchased and paid for. Many contributed materials and paint. At present there remains a relatively small debt. It was not necessary to make a loan from the Church Extension Fund of the ULCA. The parsonage in Blaine is a real manifestation of congregational aggressiveness and cooperation. It is a real credit to the congregation at Blaine.

From the November 4th bulletin of First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg: "The Pastor and Mrs. Eylands were very happy to have a large number of the members and friends of the congregation visit the parsonage on Friday and Saturday of last week. The general reaction to this 'house inspection' was very favorable. The visitors expressed their satisfaction at the congregation having acquired such a fine and modern home for a parsonage. Special thanks are due the women's organizations of the church and the Board of Deacons, who took turns at serving the guests which totalled about 340 for the two

days." First Lutheran, Winnipeg, is to be congratulated in the purchase of their splendid new seven-room parsonage. (It is hoped that in the next issue of the "Parish Messenger" pictures of the three new parsonages in Winnipeg, Blaine and Gimli, will be presented. Ed.)

Two new circles have been added to the Women of the Church organization in the Gimli Lutheran Church; reports Pastor H. S. Sigmar. There are now three circles including the original Ladies' Aid, "Framsokn".

A special congregational rally was held for Lutheran World Action at the Husavick Hall by Vidines congregation, Gimli Parish recently. The Sunday School children sang several numbers, and the film, "For Good or Evil", was shown.

Twelve young people were confirmed by Pastor H. S. Sigmar in Ardal Lutheran Church, Arborg, on the first Sunday of October. He was ably assisted by Mrs. H. S. Erlendson in the preparation of the class.

Due to the "quick freeze" of Lake Winnipeg, Hecla's congregation, Big Island, had to postpone the service that had been planned for the first Sunday in November. The pastor would have been able to get there, but it is a question how long he might have been on their hands had he gone.

On Sunday, September 30th, the congregation of Calvary Church, Seattle, held "Open House" for Pastor and Mrs. Sigmar at the parsonage. Tani Bjornson sang "Bless This House"; the Ladies' Aid served a delicious luncheon to over 125 people, and the pastor and his wife were presented with a generous purse from members and friends of the congregation. On October 22nd, the ladies of the congregation held a "Kitchen Shower" for Mrs. Sigmar, in the Church Parlors. She was presented with many useful and lovely gifts.

Hnausa congregation celebrated the renovation and redecoration of

its church with a service on the first Sunday in November. President Ed Marteinsson spoke about the memorial gifts, including the memorial lights just previous to the dedication by Pastor H. S. Sigmar in memory of the pioneer founders and other individuals.

The Ladies' Aid of the Cavalier congregation held a clothing drive just before the close of the summer. The results were successful and the clothing was sent to Korea through Lutheran World Relief. A waste paper drive was conducted by the men of the congregation and the proceeds were given to the Sunday School for the purchase of new chairs for the beginners. During this fall and winter the congregation has been having services every other Sunday. Theol. Student Stefan Gutormsson has been coming from Minneapolis for these services.

At a recent service in the Vidir congregation of the Arborg Parish, the Rev. H. S. Sigmar baptized eight babies.

On November 21st, the Ladies' Aid Society of First Lutheran Church, Winnipeg, celebrated their 65th anniversary. It was organized in August, 1886, the first Lutheran Ladies' organization in the city of Winnipeg, just as First Lutheran Church is the first Lutheran congregation in that city. An interesting program recounting some of the activity of the past 65 years was presented.

Glenboro Lutheran congregation held its annual anniversary supper on October 18th, followed by a variety program. A large crowd attended. Pastor Harald Sigmar conducted services in Argyle Parish on Nov. 18, preaching in Baldur and Glenboro churches.

The Lundar congregation held its annual meeting November 18th. It revealed a very successful year, with an income of over \$2,600. The congregation decided to continue full-time support of its pastor, and en-

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"T.N.T." — Treasurer's Newest Talk

All statements to the thirty-six active Churches of the Synod have been mailed out as at November 6th, 1951. This is the earliest date on record for the billing of parishes. The reason for this is that our Synod is endeavouring to get out from under. Next year we hope to operate on a budget set by the convention. In order to operate on a budget the Synod must be free of debt. We are as at this time of writing, free of debt. However, the treasurer can also report that we are free of assets and that is his reason for the early billing of parishes. We paid our commitments to the ULCA and LWA in full. We have paid our printing costs in full. We owe no bills to anyone. We are at the same time running a very slim bank account.

The success of our Church, which also means the success of our Synod, depends on percentages or proportions. We are directed according to the Bible to tithe, that is to give

ten per cent of our earnings to God. Every successful church runs on a percentage basis with its members and in its gifts to the creation of God's Kingdom which we know as the ULCA and LWA. The man tithes and so the Church tithes and so the world becomes Christian. It is as simple as that. Let us look at our Synod record of giving. The most recent record has our percentage rate at .6 or six tenths of one per cent of the income of our people. The ULCA record is two and two-tenths per cent and we are partly responsible that their record is no higher than that, being that we are members of the big ULCA family. Our only hope for the future lies in increasing our batting average. My question to you is Can We Do It?

I am pleased to report the following receipts to date.

Langruth paid in full their statement from the Synod. This congregation deserves special credit for its promptness in giving.

Church	Synod Dues	ULCA (Missions)	CHEY	LWA	Parish Messenger
Blaine	\$	\$	\$75.00	\$	\$
Langruth	45.00	172.00	10.00	25.00	10.00
First Lutheran				52.00	
Vidalin (Hensel)				20.00	
Vikur		62.50			
Hallson				14.32	
Concordia				51.25	
Pjeturs (Svold)				28.14	
Argyle			2.00		
Selkirk				25.00	
Selkirk Luth. Ladies Aid				57.20	
Sunrise Lutheran Camp				21.58	
Gimli	75.00		20.38	44.00	
Braedrasofnudur, Riverton, Man.	75.00				40.00
Given to LWA through the First Lutheran Church in memory of the late A. S. Bardal.					
Office Staff, Iowa Children's Aid Society					\$12.00
Mrs. E. H. (Martha) Benson, Duluth, Minn.					5.00
Mrs. Johanna Jonasson, Winnipeg					10.00

This is included with the total credit for First Lutheran LWA.

Please notice that CHEY is still being remembered by the people who have already supported this cause. What about those churches who have done nothing for this cause. The drive is still on. Let us show our support of this worthy effort by giving NOW.

N. O. BARDAL.

Join in the Fun!

God wants us to be cheerful, happy givers. To help us enjoy the fun of giving, He gave us a plan...

My wife and I remember the days when giving was painful. Calls came from the Church and we had to say, "No". We had gone overboard in pleasing ourselves and had little or nothing left to give for the Gospel of Christ.

Testimony of a Friend

Then, through a fellow layman, we learned about Christian tithing. He told us how grateful he was that God had blessed him so much all his life. He told how he felt compelled to say "thank you" in specific terms. In the Bible he discovered one way: tithing. He tried giving at least a tenth of his income for God's work. It worked.

What he said and did brought a conversion—a 100% turnabout—in us. We now understood that all our money was God's money. We earn it with the life, energy, and ability He gives us. We had to use it as His Christian stewards! So—

Now, instead of putting God last, we put Him first. Before spending money for anything else, we set aside at least a tenth for the Church and charity... and find that He still provides us with enough to care for our own needs and pleasures.

And we are always ready to answer His calls:

When we need money for church and Sunday School envelopes, we're ready. When the Women's Missionary Society, Brotherhood, Luther League, and Laymen's Movement projects are presented, we're ready. When special appeals come for a church organ, paint job, new building, Lutheran World Action, or Christian Higher Education, we're ready.

Finally We're Effective

We've discovered that giving can be fun—that it is more blessed to give than to receive. One of these blessings. All of us know that finally

we are beginning to give effectively for that which matters most.

Best of all, when we put Christ first in our use of money, we find that it puts Him first in many other things, too.

You are invited to join us in Christian tithing.

—Henry Endress

Call for Stewardship Committee, EMV

A committee on stewardship for each ULCA congregation is recommended in the new model constitution and by-laws just issued for congregations.

Duties of the committee, the ULCA recommends, "shall be to promote the expression of Christian faith in the daily life of the members; to inform them about the congregation's local, synodical and world-wide ministries; to teach them the Christian use of money; and to lead them to higher levels of proportionate giving for the Lord's work."

The by-laws also suggest that the annual Every Member Visit and projects which promote informed and grateful giving should be responsibilities of the committee.

NEWS FLASHES . . .

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thusiastically elected two new committees on finance and membership.

Pastor and Mrs. Fredriksson became grandparents on this day, when their daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. V. Ameg, became proud parents of a daughter, Deborah Lee.

Recently a new furnace was installed in the Lunder church. A friend presented the pastor with a study chair, and another friend a beautiful desk lamp.

Farmers in the Minneota Parish have been offering large amounts of grain, corn, etc., for CROP, overseas church relief organization. Generous offerings were also received this fall for Lutheran World Action.